

ESSAYS OF TO-DAY
AND YESTERDAY

ANDREW
LANG

E. H. Lee

ANDREW LANG

Essays of To-day and Yesterday

First Volumes

PHILIP GUEDALLA
JAMES AGATE
BASIL MACDONALD
HASTINGS
BARRY PAIN
ALICE MEYNELL
DAVID GRAYSON
ALLAN MONKHOUSE
A. C. BENSON
ANDREW LANG
ARNOLD BENNETT
A. G. GARDINER
HILAIRE BELLOC
C. E. MONTAGUE
AUGUSTINE BIRRELL
J. B. PRIESTLEY
STACY AUMONIER
EDWARD THOMAS
ROBERT BLATCHFORD
DION CLAYTON
CALTHROP

*Many other volumes in active
preparation*

LONDON CALCUTTA SYDNEY

First published March 1926
by GEORGE G. HARRAP & Co. LTD.
39-41 Parker Street, Kingsway, London, W.C.2
Reprinted October 1926

Printed in Great Britain at THE BALLANTYNE PRESS by
SPOTTISWOODE, BALLANTYNE & Co. LTD.
Colchester, London & Eton

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THERE were men of mark in the nineties—that age of promise when it was still possible to speculate upon “what Mr Stevenson may do some day.” And of all that brilliant company the most versatile was undoubtedly “Andrew of the brindled hair.” A glance at the Bibliography in this selection, from which are excluded all his books for children, his translations, and works written in collaboration with others, will give enough evidence of his manysidedness. His multifarious activities must present a sore problem to the literary historian who loves to pigeonhole his authors neatly, and to the ordinary reader they are no less bewildering. It is exceedingly difficult to comprehend fully the activities of such a man. If we duly admire Lang’s critical acumen we stand in danger of doing less than justice to his achievements as a poet. The painstaking accuracy of the historian may cause us to lose sight of those enchanting books of fairy-tales, in all the colours of the rainbow, that have made succeeding generations his bondslaves. The delicate touch which gave the essayist his charm might well seem incompatible with the weight of learning that made him a perfect translator of Homer. Andrew Lang combined all these qualities, and many more, in an uncanny fashion that may well make the puny specialists of a later age gasp in utter amazement. At the same time, few essayists have shown a nicer equipoise or a finer judgment. Whether he writes of boys or of buccaneers, of Red Men or of bibliophiles, all that he says is punctuated with a

ANDREW LANG

delicious humour and informed with sound common sense.

He was born at Selkirk in 1844, and was educated at Edinburgh Academy, St Andrews University, and Balliol College, Oxford, where he took a classical first-class. He was elected Fellow of Merton College in 1868, and died in 1912.

The essays in this selection are reprinted by permission of Mrs Andrew Lang and Messrs Longmans, Green and Co.

F. H. P.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE BOY	9
ADVENTURES OF BUCCANEERS	23
ON BOOKS ABOUT RED MEN	32
FROM MR ALLAN QUATERMAIN TO SIR HENRY CURTIS	38
JOHN BUNYAN	44
A BOOKMAN'S PURGATORY	52
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	63

THE BOY

AS a humble student of savage life, I have found it necessary to make researches into the manners and customs of boys. Boys are not what a vain people supposes. If you meet them in the holidays, you find them affable and full of kindness and good qualities. They will condescend to your weakness at lawn-tennis, they will aid you in your selection of fly-hooks, and, to be brief, will behave with much more than the civility of tame Zulus or Red Men on a missionary settlement. But boys at school and among themselves, left to the wild justice and traditional laws which many generations of boys have evolved, are entirely different beings. They resemble that Polynesian prince who had rejected the errors of polytheism for those of an extreme sect of Primitive Seceders. For weeks at a time this prince was known to be 'steady,' but every month or so he disappeared, and his subjects said that he was 'lying off.' To adopt an American idiom, he 'felt like brandy and water'; he also 'felt like' wearing no clothes, and generally rejecting his new conceptions of duty and decency. In fact, he had a good bout of savagery, and then he returned to his tall hat, his varnished boots, his hymn-book, and his edifying principles. The life of small boys at school (before they get into long-tailed coats and the Upper Fifth) is often a mere course of 'lying-off'—of relapse into native savagery with its laws and customs.

If anyone has so far forgotten his own boyhood as to think this description exaggerated, let him just fancy what our comfortable civilized life would be if we could

ANDREW LANG

become boys in character and custom. Let us suppose that you are elected to a new club, of which most of the members are strangers to you. You enter the doors for the first time, when two older members, who have been gossiping in the hall, pounce upon you with the exclamation, "Hullo, here's a new fellow! You fellow, what's your name?" You reply, let us say, "Johnson." "I don't believe it, it's such a rum name. What's your father?" Perhaps you are constrained to answer "a duke" or (more probably) "a solicitor." In the former case your friends bound up into the smoking-room, howling, "Here's a new fellow says his father is a duke. Let's take the cheek out of him." And they 'take it out' with umbrellas, slippers, and other surgical instruments. Or, in the latter case (your parent being a solicitor), they reply, "Then your father must be a beastly cad. All solicitors are sharks. *My* father says so, and he knows. How many sisters have you?" The new member answers, "Four." "Any of them married?" "No." "How awfully awkward for you."

By this time, perhaps, luncheon is ready, or the evening papers come in, and you are released for a moment. You sneak up into the library, where you naturally expect to be entirely alone, and you settle on a sofa with a novel. But an old member bursts into the room, spies a new fellow, and puts him through the usual catechism. He ends with, "How much tin have you got?" You answer, "Twenty pounds," or whatever the sum may be, for perhaps you had contemplated playing whist. "Very well, fork it out; you must give a dinner, all new fellows must, and *you* are not going to begin by being a stingy beast?" Thus addressed, as your friend is a big, bald man, who looks mischievous, you do 'fork out' all your ready money, and your new

friend goes off to consult the cook. Meanwhile you "shed a blooming tear," as Homer says, and go home heartbroken. Now, does any grown-up man call this state of society civilization? Would life be worth living (whatever one's religious consolations) on these terms? Of course not, and yet this picture is a not overdrawn sketch of the career of some new boy, at some schools new or old. The existence of a small schoolboy is, in other respects, not unlike that of an outsider in a lawless 'Brotherhood,' as the Irish playfully call their murder clubs.

The small boy is *in* the society, but not *of* it, as far as any benefits go. He has to field out (and I admit that the discipline is salutary) while other boys bat. Other boys commit the faults, and compel him to copy out the impositions—say, five hundred lines of Virgil—with which their sins are visited. Other boys enjoy the pleasures of football, while the small boy has to run vaguely about, never within five yards of the ball. Big boys reap the glories of paper-chases, the small boy gets lost in the bitter weather, on the open moors, or perhaps (as in one historical case) is frozen to death within a measurable distance of the school playground. And the worst of it is that, as a member of the great school secret society, the small boy can never complain of his wrongs, or divulge the name of his tormentors. It is in this respect that he resembles a harmless fellow, dragged into the coils of an Anarchist 'Inner Brotherhood.' He is exposed to all sorts of wrongs from his neighbours, and he can only escape by turning 'informer,' by breaking the most sacred law of his society, losing all social status, and, probably, obliging his parents to remove him from school. Life at school, as among the Celtic peoples, turns on the belief that law and authority are natural enemies, against which every one is banded.

ANDREW LANG

The chapter of bullying among boys is one on which a man enters with reluctance. Boys are, on the whole, such good fellows, and so full of fine, unsophisticated qualities, that the mature mind would gladly turn away its eyes from beholding their iniquities. Even a cruel bully does not inevitably and invariably develop into a bad man. He is, let us hope, only passing through the savage stage, in which the torture of prisoners is a recognized institution. He has, perhaps, too little imagination to understand the pain he causes. Very often bullying is not physically cruel, but only a perverted sort of humour, such as Kingsley, in *Hypatia*, recognized among his favourite Goths. I remember a feeble, foolish boy at school (feeble he certainly was, and was thought foolish) who became the subject of much humorous bullying. His companions used to tie a thin thread round his ear, and attach this to a bar at such a height that he could only avoid breaking it by standing on tiptoe. But he was told that he must not break the thread. To avoid infringing this commandment, he put himself to considerable inconvenience and afforded much enjoyment to the spectators.

Men of middle age, rather early middle age, remember the two following species of bullying to which they were subjected, and which, perhaps, are obsolescent. Tall stools were piled up in a pyramid, and the victim was seated on the top, near the roof of the room. The other savages brought him down from this bad eminence by hurling other stools at those which supported him. Or the victim was made to place his hands against the door, with the fingers outstretched, while the young tormentors played at the Chinese knife-trick. They threw knives, that is to say, at the door between the apertures of the fingers, and, as a rule, they hit the fingers and not the door. These diversions I know to

be correctly reported, but the following pretty story is, perhaps, a myth. At one of the most famous public schools, a præpostor, or monitor, or sixth-form boy having authority, heard a pistol-shot in the room above his own. He went up and found a big boy and a little boy. They denied having any pistol. The monitor returned to his studies, again was sure he heard a shot, went up, and found the little boy dead. The big boy had been playing the William Tell trick with him, and had hit his head instead of the apple. That is the legend. Whether it be true or false, all boys will agree that the little victim could not have escaped by complaining to the monitor. No. Death before dishonour. But the side not so seamy of this picture of school-life is the extraordinary power of honour among boys. Of course, the laws of the secret society might well terrify a puerile informer. But the sentiment of honour is even more strong than fear, and will probably outlast the very disagreeable circumstances in which it was developed.

People say bullying is not what it used to be. The much-abused monitorial system has this in it of good, that it enables a clever and kindly boy who is high up in the school to stop the cruelties (if he hears of them) of a much bigger boy who is low in the school. But he seldom hears of them. Habitual bullies are very cunning, and I am acquainted with instances in which they carry their victims off to lonely torture cells (so to speak) and deserted places fit for the sport. Some years ago a small boy, after a long course of rope's-ending in out-of-the-way dens, revealed the abominations of some naval cadets. There was not much sympathy with him in the public mind, and perhaps his case was not well managed. But it was made clear that, whereas among men an unpopular person is only spoken evil of behind

ANDREW LANG

his back, an unpopular small boy among boys is made to suffer in a more direct and very unpleasant way.

Most of us leave school with the impression that there was a good deal of bullying when we were little, but that the institution has died out. The truth is that we have grown too big to be bullied, and too good-natured to bully ourselves. When I left school, I thought bullying was an extinct art, like encaustic painting (before it was rediscovered by Sir William Richmond). But a distinguished writer, who was a small boy when I was a big one, has since revealed to me the most abominable cruelties which were being practised at the very moment when I supposed bullying to have had its day and ceased to be. Now, the small boy need only have mentioned the circumstances to any one of a score of big boys, and the tormentor would have been first thrashed, and then, probably, expelled.

A friend of my own was travelling lately in a wild and hilly region on the other side of the world, let us say in the Mountains of the Moon. In a mountain tavern he had thrust upon him the society of the cook, a very useless young man, who astonished him by references to one of our universities, and to the enjoyments of that seat of learning. This youth (who was made cook, and a very bad cook too, because he could do nothing else) had been expelled from a large English school. And he was expelled because he had felled a bully with a paving-stone, and had expressed his readiness to do it again. Now, there was no doubt that this cook in the mountain inn was a very unserviceable young fellow. But I wish more boys who have suffered things literally unspeakable from bullies would try whether force (in the form of a paving-stone) is really no remedy.

The Catholic author of a recent book (*Schools*, by

Lieut.-Colonel Raleigh Chichester) is very hard on "Protestant schools," and thinks that the Catholic system of constant watching is a remedy for bullying and other evils. "Swing-doors with their upper half glazed might have their uses," he says, and he does not see why a boy should not be permitted to complain if he is roasted, like Tom Brown, before a large fire. The boys at one Catholic school described by Colonel Raleigh Chichester "are never without surveillance of some sort." This is true of most French schools, and anyone who wishes to understand the consequences (there) may read the published confessions of a *pion*—an usher, or 'spy.' A more degraded and degrading life than that of the wretched *pion* it is impossible to imagine. In an English private school the system of *espionnage* and tale-bearing, when it exists, is probably not unlike what Mr Anstey describes in *Vice Versa*. But in the Catholic schools spoken of by Colonel Raleigh Chichester the surveillance may be, as he says, "that of a parent; an aid to the boys in their games rather than a check." The religious question as between Catholics and Protestants has no essential connection with the subject. A Protestant school might, and Grimstone's did, have tale-bearers; possibly a Catholic school might exist without parental surveillance. That system is called by its foes a 'police,' by its friends a 'paternal,' system. But fathers don't exercise the 'paternal' system themselves in this country, and we may take it for granted that, while English society and religion are as they are, surveillance at our large schools will be impossible. If anyone regrets this, let him read the descriptions of French schools and schooldays in Balzac's *Louis Lambert*, in the *Memoirs* of M. Maxime du Camp, in any book where a Frenchman speaks his mind about his youth. He will find spying (of course)

ANDREW LANG

among the ushers, contempt and hatred on the side of the boys, unwholesome and cruel punishments, a total lack of healthy exercise; and he will hear of holidays spent in premature excursions into forbidden and shady quarters of the town.

No doubt the best security against bullying is in constant occupation. There can hardly (in spite of Master George Osborne's experience in *Vanity Fair*) be much bullying in an open cricket-field. Big boys, too, with good hearts, should not only stop bullying when they come across it, but make it their business to find out where it exists. Exist it will, more or less, despite all precautions, while boys are boys—that is, are passing through a modified form of the savage state.

There is a curious fact in the boyish character which seems, at first sight, to make good the opinion that private education, at home, is the true method. Before they go out into school-life many little fellows of nine or so are extremely original, imaginative, and almost poetical. They are fond of books, fond of nature, and, if you can win their confidence, will tell you all sorts of pretty thoughts and fancies which lie about them in their infancy. I have known a little boy who liked to lie on the grass and to people the alleys and glades of that miniature forest with fairies and dwarfs, whom he seemed actually to see in a kind of vision. But he went to school, he instantly won the hundred yards race for boys under twelve, and he came back a young barbarian, interested in 'the theory of touch' (at football), curious in the art of bowling, and no more capable than you or I of seeing fairies in a green meadow. He was caught up into the air of the boy's world, and his imagination was in abeyance for a season.

This is a common enough thing, and rather a melancholy spectacle to behold. One is tempted to believe

that school causes the loss of a good deal of genius, and that the small boys who leave home poets, and come back barbarians, have been wasted. But, on the other hand, if they had been kept at home and encouraged, the chances are that they would have blossomed into infant phenomena and nothing better. The awful infancy of Mr John Stuart Mill is a standing warning. Mr Mill would probably have been a much happier and wiser man if he had not been a precocious linguist, economist, and philosopher, but had passed through a healthy stage of indifference to learning and speculation at a public school. Look, again, at the childhood of Bishop Thirlwall. His *Primitiæ* were published (by Samuel Tipper, London, 1808) when young Connop was but eleven years of age. His indiscreet father "launched this slender bark," as he says, and it sailed through three editions between 1808 and 1809. Young Thirlwall was taught Latin at three years of age, "and at four read Greek with an ease and fluency which astonished all who heard him." At seven he composed an essay *On the Uncertainty of Human Life*, but "his taste for poetry was not discovered till a later period." His sermons, some forty, occupy most of the little volume in which these *Primitiæ* were collected.

He was especially concerned about Sabbath desecration. "I confess," observes this sage of ten, "when I look upon the present and past state of our public morals, and when I contrast our present luxury, dissipation, and depravity, with past frugality and virtue, I feel not merely a sensation of regret, but also of terror, for the result of the change." "The late Revolution in France," he adds, "has afforded us a remarkable lesson how necessary religion is to a State, and that from a deficiency on that head arise the chief evils which can

ANDREW LANG

befall society." He then bids us "remember that the Nebuchadnezzar who may destroy our Israel is near at hand," though it might be difficult to show how Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Israel.

As to the uncertainty of life, he remarks that "Edward VI died in his minority, and disappointed his subjects, to whom he had promised a happy reign." Of this infant's thirty-nine sermons (just as many as the Articles) it may be said that they are in no way inferior to other examples of this class of literature. But sermons are among the least 'scarce' and 'rare' of human essays, and many parents would rather see their boy patiently acquiring the art of wicketkeeping at school than moralizing on the uncertainty of life at home. Some one "having presented to the young author a copy of verses on the trite and familiar subject of the Ploughboy," he replied with an ode on *The Potboy*.

Bliss is not always join'd to wealth,
Nor dwells beneath the gilded roof,
For poverty is bliss with health,
Of that my potboy stands a proof.

The volume ends with this determination:

Still shall I seek Apollo's shelt'ring ray,
To cheer my spirits and inspire my lay.

If any parent or guardian desires any further information about *Les Enfants devenus célèbres par leurs écrits*, he will find it in a work of that name, published in Paris in 1688. The learned Scioppius published works at sixteen, "which deserved" (and perhaps obtained) "the admiration of dotards." M. Du Maurier asserts that, at the age of fifteen, Grotius pleaded causes at the Bar. At eleven Meursius made orations and harangues which were much admired. At fifteen Alexandre le Jeune wrote anacreontic verses, and (less excusably) a

commentary on the Institutions of Gaius. Grevin published a tragedy and two comedies at the age of thirteen, and at fifteen Louis Stella was a professor of Greek. But no one reads Grevin now, nor Stella, nor Alexandre le Jeune, and perhaps their time might have been better occupied in being "soaring human boys" than in composing tragedies and commentaries. Monsieur le Duc de Maine published, in 1678, his *Œuvres d'un Auteur de Sept Ans*, a royal example to be avoided by all boys. These and several score of other examples may perhaps reconcile us to the spectacle of puerile genius fading away in the existence of the common British schoolboy, who is nothing of a poet, and still less of a jurisconsult.

The British authors who understand boys best are not those who have written books exclusively about boys. There is Canon Farrar, for example, whose romances of boyish life appear to be very popular, but whose boys, somehow, are not real boys. They are too good when they are good, and when they are bad they are not perhaps too bad (that is impossible), but they are bad in the wrong way. They are bad with a manish and conscious vice, whereas even bad boys seem to sin less consciously and after a ferocious fashion of their own. Of the boys in *Tom Brown* it is difficult to speak, because the Rugby boy under Arnold seems to have been of a peculiar species. A contemporary pupil was asked, when an undergraduate, what he conceived to be the peculiar characteristic of Rugby boys. He said, after mature reflection, that "the *differentia* of the Rugby boy was his moral thoughtfulness." Now the characteristic of the ordinary boy is his want of what is called moral thoughtfulness.

He lives in simple obedience to school traditions. These may compel him, at one school, to speak in a peculiar language, and to persecute and beat all boys

who are slow at learning this language. At another school he may regard dislike of the manly game of football as the sin with which "heaven heads the count of crimes." On the whole this notion seems a useful protest against the prematurely artistic beings who fill their studies with photographs of Greek fragments, vases, etchings by the newest etcher, bits of china, Oriental rugs, and very curious old brass candlesticks. The 'challenge cup' soon passes away from the keeping of any house in a public school where Bunthorne is a popular and imitated character. But when we reach æsthetic boys, we pass out of the savage stage into hobbledehoyhood. The bigger boys at public schools are often terribly 'advanced,' and when they are not at work or play they are vexing themselves with the riddle of the earth, evolution, agnosticism, and all that kind of thing. Latin verses may not be what conservatives fondly deem them, and even cricket may, it is said, become too absorbing a pursuit, but either or both are better than precocious freethinking and sacrifice on the altar of the Beautiful.

A big boy who is tackling Haeckel or composing *virelais* in playtime is doing himself no good, and is worse than useless to the society of which he is a member. The small boys, who are the most ardent of hero-worshippers, either despise him or they allow him to address them in *chansons royaux*, and respond with trebles in *triolet*s. At present a great many boys leave school, pass three years or four at the universities, and go back as masters to the place where some of their old schoolfellows are still pupils. It is through these very young masters, perhaps, that 'advanced' speculations and tastes get into schools, where, however excellent in themselves, they are rather out of place. Indeed, the very young master, though usually earnest in his work,

must be a sage indeed if he can avoid talking to the elder boys about the problems that interest him, and so forcing their minds into precocious attitudes. The advantage of Eton boys used to be, perhaps is still, that they came up to college absolutely destitute of 'ideas,' and guiltless of reading anything more modern than Virgil. Thus their intellects were quite fallow, and they made astonishing progress when they bent their fresh and unwearied minds to study. But too many boys now leave school with settled opinions derived from the very latest thing out, from the newest German pessimist or American socialist. It may, however, be argued that ideas of these sorts are like measles, and that it is better to take them early and be done with them for ever.

While schools are reformed and Latin grammars of the utmost ingenuity and difficulty are published, boys on the whole change very little. They remain the beings whom Thackeray understood better than any other writer: Thackeray, who liked boys so much and was so little blind to their little defects. I think he exaggerates their habit of lying to masters, or, if they lied in his day, their character has altered in that respect, and they are more truthful than many men find it expedient to be. And they have given up fighting; the old battles between Berry and Biggs, or Dobbin and Cuff (Major), are things of the glorious past. Big boys don't fight, and there is a whisper that little boys kick each other's shins when in wrath. That practice can hardly be called an improvement, even if we do not care for fisticuffs. Perhaps the gloves are the best peace-makers at school. When all the boys, by practice in boxing, know pretty well whom they can in a friendly way lick, they are less tempted to more crucial experiments 'without the gloves.'

ANDREW LANG

But even the ascertainment of one's relative merits with the gloves hurts a good deal, and one may thank heaven that the fountain of youth (as described by Pontus de Tyarde) is not a common beverage. By drinking this liquid, says the old Frenchman, one is insensibly brought back from old to middle age, and to youth and boyhood. But one would prefer to stop drinking of the fountain before actually being reduced to boy's estate, and passing once more through the tumultuous experiences of that period. And, of these, *not having enough to eat* is by no means the least common. The evidence as to execrable dinners is rather dispiriting, and one may end by saying that if there is a worse fellow than a bully it is a master who does not see that his boys are supplied with plenty of wholesome food. He, at least, could not venture, like a distinguished headmaster, to preach and publish sermons on *Boys' Life : its Fulness*. A schoolmaster who has boarders is a hotel-keeper, and thereby makes his income, but he need not keep a hotel which would be dispraised in guide-books. Dinners are a branch of school economy which should not be left to the wives of schoolmasters. *They* have never been boys.

From "Adventures among Books"

ADVENTURES OF BUCCANEERS

MOST of us, as boys, have envied the buccaneers. The greatest of all boys, Canon Kingsley, once wrote a pleasing and regretful poem in which the Last Buccaneer represents himself as a kind of picturesque philanthropist:

There were forty craft in Aves that were both swift and stout,
All furnished well with small arms, and cannons round about ;
And a thousand men in Aves made laws so fair and free
To choose their valiant captains and obey them loyally.

Thence we sailed against the Spaniard with his hoards of
plate and gold,
Which he wrung with cruel tortures from Indian folk of old ;
Likewise the merchant captains, with hearts as hard as stone,
Who flog men and keel-haul them, and starve them to the bone.

The buccaneer is a “gallant sailor,” according to Kingsley’s poem—a Robin Hood of the waters, who preys only on the wicked rich, or the cruel and Popish Spaniard, and the extortionate shipowner. For his own part, when he is not rescuing poor Indians, the buccaneer lives mainly “for climate and the affections”:

Oh, sweet it was in Aves to hear the landward breeze,
A-swing with good tobacco in a net between the trees,
With a negro lass to fan you, while you listened to the roar
Of the breakers on the reef outside, that never touched the shore.

This is delightfully idyllic, like the lives of the Tahitian shepherds in the *Anti-Jacobin*—the shepherds whose occupation was a sinecure, as there were no sheep in Tahiti.

Yet the vocation was not really so touchingly chivalrous as the poet would have us deem. One Joseph

Esquemeling, himself a buccaneer, has written the history and described the exploits of his companions in plain prose, warning eager youths that "pieces-of-eight do not grow on every tree," as many raw recruits have believed. Mr Esquemeling's account of these matters may be purchased, with a great deal else that is instructive and entertaining, in *The History of the Buccaneers in America*. My edition (of 1810) is a dumpy little book, in very small type, and quite a crowd of publishers took part in the venture. The older editions are difficult to procure if your pockets are not stuffed with pieces-of-eight. You do not often find even this volume, but "when found make a note of," and you have a reply to Canon Kingsley.

A charitable old Scotch lady, who heard our ghostly foe evil spoken of, remarked that, "If we were all as diligent and conscientious as the Devil, it would be better for us." Now, the buccaneers were certainly models of diligence and conscientiousness in their own industry, which was to torture people till they gave up their goods, and then to run them through the body, and spend the spoils over drink and dice. Except Dampier, who was a clever man, but a poor buccaneer (Mr Clark Russell has written his life), they were the most hideously ruthless miscreants that ever disgraced the earth and the sea. But their courage and endurance were no less notable than their greed and cruelty, so that a moral can be squeezed even out of these abandoned miscreants. The soldiers and sailors who made their way within gunshot of Khartoum, overcoming thirst, hunger, heat, the desert, and the gallant children of the desert, did not fight, march, and suffer more bravely than the scoundrels who sacked Maracaibo and burned Panama. Their good qualities were no less astounding and exemplary than their almost incredible wickedness.

ADVENTURES OF BUCCANEERS

They did not lie about in hammocks much, listening to the landward wind among the woods—the true buccaneers. To tell the truth, most of them had no particular cause to love the human species. They were often Europeans who had been sold into slavery on the West Indian plantations, where they learned lessons of cruelty by suffering it. Thus Mr Joseph Esquemeling, our historian, was beaten, tortured, and nearly starved to death in Tortuga, “so I determined, not knowing how to get any living, to enter into the order of the pirates or robbers of the sea.” The poor Indians of the isles, much pitied by Kingsley’s buccaneer, had a habit of sticking their prisoners all over with thorns, wrapped in oily cotton, whereto they then set fire. “These cruelties many Christians have seen while they lived among these barbarians.” Mr Esquemeling was to see, and inflict, plenty of this kind of torment, which was not out of the way nor unusual. One planter alone had killed over a hundred of his servants—“the English did the same with theirs.”

A buccaneer voyage began in stealing a ship, collecting desperadoes, and torturing the local herdsmen till they gave up their masters’ flocks, which were salted as provisions. Articles of service were then drawn up, on the principle “No prey, no pay.” The spoils, when taken, were loyally divided as a rule, though Captain Morgan, of Wales, made no more scruple about robbing his crew than about barbecuing a Spanish priest. “They are very civil and charitable to each other, so that if anyone wants what another has, with great willingness they give it to one another.” In other matters they did not in the least resemble the early Christians. A fellow nicknamed “The Portuguese” may be taken as our first example of their commendable qualities.

ANDREW LANG

With a small ship of four guns he had taken a great one of twenty guns, with 70,000 pieces-of-eight. . . . He himself, however, was presently captured by a larger vessel, and imprisoned on board. Being carelessly watched, he escaped on two earthen jars (for he could not swim), reached the woods in Campechy, and walked for a hundred and twenty miles through the bush. His only food was a few shellfish, and by way of a knife he had a large nail, which he whetted to an edge on a stone. Having made a kind of raft, he struck a river, and paddled to Golpho Triste, where he found congenial pirates. With twenty of these, and a boat, he returned to Campechy, where he had been a prisoner, and actually captured the large ship in which he had lain captive! Bad luck pursued him, however: his prize was lost in a storm; he reached Jamaica in a canoe, and never afterwards was concerned as leader in any affair of distinction. Not even Odysseus had more resource, nor was more long-enduring; but Fortune was "The Portuguese's" foe.

Braziliano, another buccaneer, served as a pirate before the mast, and "was beloved and respected by all." Being raised to command, he took a plate ship; but this success was of indifferent service to his otherwise amiable character. "He would often appear foolish and brutish when in drink," and had been known to roast Spaniards alive on wooden spits "for not showing him hog-yards where he might steal swine." One can hardly suppose that Kingsley would have regretted *this* buccaneer, even if he had been the last, which unluckily he was not. His habit of sitting in the street beside a barrel of beer, and shooting all passers-by who would not drink with him, provoked remark, and was an act detestable to all friends of temperance principles.

François L'Olonnois, from Southern France, had

ADVENTURES OF BUCCANEERS

been kidnapped, and sold as a slave in the Caribbee Islands. Recovering his freedom, he plundered the Spanish, says my buccaneer author, "till his unfortunate death." With two canoes he captured a ship which had been sent after him, carrying ten guns and a hangman for his express benefit. This hangman, much to the fellow's chagrin, L'Olonnois put to death like the rest of his prisoners. His great achievements were in the Gulf of Venezuela or Bay of Maracaibo. The gulf is a strong place; the mouth, no wider than a gunshot, is guarded by two islands. Far up the inlet is Maracaibo, a town of three thousand people, fortified and surrounded by woods. Yet farther up is the town of Gibraltar. To attack these was a desperate enterprise; but L'Olonnois stole past the forts, and frightened the townsfolk into the woods. As a rule the Spaniards made the poorest resistance; there were examples of courage, but none of conduct. With strong forts, heavy guns, many men, provisions, and ammunition they quailed before the desperate valour of the pirates. The towns were sacked, the fugitives hunted out in the woods, and the most abominable tortures were applied to make them betray their friends and reveal their treasures. When they were silent, or had no treasures to declare, they were hacked, twisted, burned, and starved to death.

Such were the manners of L'Olonnois; and Captain Morgan, of Wales, was even more ruthless.

Gibraltar was well fortified and strengthened after Maracaibo fell; new batteries were raised, the way through the woods was barricaded, and no fewer than eight hundred men were under arms to resist a small pirate force, exhausted by debauch, and having its retreat cut off by the forts at the mouth of the great salt-water loch. But L'Olonnois did not blench: he

ANDREW LANG

told the men that audacity was their one hope, also that he would pistol the first who gave ground. The men cheered enthusiastically, and a party of three hundred and fifty landed. The barricaded way they could not force, and in a newly cut path they met a strong battery which fired grape. But L'Olonnois was invincible. He tried that old trick which rarely fails, a sham retreat, and this lured the Spaniards from their earthwork on the path. The pirates then turned, sword in hand, slew two hundred of the enemy, and captured eight guns. The town yielded, the people fled to the woods, and then began the wonted sport of torturing the prisoners. Maracaibo they ransomed afresh, obtained a pilot, passed the forts with ease, and returned after sacking a small province. On a dividend being declared, they parted 260,000 pieces-of-eight among the band, and spent the pillage in a revel of three weeks.

L'Olonnois "got great repute" by this conduct, but I rejoice to add that in a raid on Nicaragua he "miserably perished," and met what Mr Esquemeling calls "his unfortunate death." For L'Olonnois was really an ungentlemanly character. He would hack a Spaniard to pieces, tear out his heart, and "gnaw it with his teeth like a ravenous wolf, saying to the rest, 'I will serve you all alike if you show me not another way'" (to a town which he designed attacking). In Nicaragua he was taken by the Indians, who, being entirely on the Spanish side, tore him to pieces and burned him. Thus we really must not be deluded by the professions of Mr Kingsley's sentimental buccaneer, with his pity for the "Indian folk of old."

Except Denis Scott, a worthy bandit in his day, Captain Henry Morgan is the first renowned British buccaneer. He was a young Welshman, who, after having been sold as a slave in Barbadoes, became a sailor

ADVENTURES OF BUCCANEERS

of fortune. With about four hundred men he assailed Puerto Bello. "If our number is small," he said, "our hearts are great," and so he assailed the third city and place of arms which Spain then possessed in the West Indies. The entrance of the harbour was protected by two strong castles, judged as "almost impregnable," while Morgan had no artillery of any avail against fortresses. Morgan had the luck to capture a Spanish soldier, whom he compelled to parley with the garrison of the castle. This he stormed and blew up, massacring all its defenders, while with its guns he disarmed the sister-fortress. When all but defeated in a new assault, the sight of the English colours animated him afresh. He made the captive monks and nuns carry the scaling-ladders; in this unwonted exploit the poor religious folk lost many of their numbers. The wall was mounted, the soldiers were defeated, though the Governor fought like a Spaniard of the old school, slew many pirates with his own hand, and pistolled some of his own men for cowardice. He died at his post, refusing quarter, and falling like a gentleman of Spain. Morgan, too, was not wanting in fortitude: he extorted 100,000 pieces-of-eight from the Governor of Panama, and sent him a pistol as a sample of the gun wherewith he took so great a city. He added that he would return and take this pistol out of Panama; nor was he less good than his word. In Cuba he divided 250,000 pieces-of-eight, and a great booty in other treasure. A few weeks saw it all in the hands of the tavern-keepers and women of the place.

Morgan's next performance was a new sack of Maracaibo, now much stronger than L'Olonnois had found it. After the most appalling cruelties, not fit to be told, he returned, passing the castles at the mouth of the port by an ingenious stratagem. Running boatload

after boatload of men to the land side, he brought them back by stealth, leading the garrison to expect an attack from that quarter. The guns were massed to landward, and no sooner was this done than Morgan sailed up through the channel with but little loss. Why the Spaniards did not close the passage with a boom does not appear. Probably they were glad to be quit of Morgan on any terms.

A great Spanish fleet he routed by the ingenious employment of a fireship. In a later expedition a strong place was taken by a curious accident. One of the buccaneers was shot through the body with an arrow. He drew it out, wrapped it in cotton, fired it from his musket, and so set light to a roof and burned the town.

His raid on Panama was extraordinary for the endurance of his men. For days they lived on the leather of bottles and belts. "Some, who were never out of their mothers' kitchens, may ask how these pirates could eat and digest these pieces of leather, so hard and dry? Whom I answer—that could they once experience what hunger, or rather famine is, they would find the way, as the pirates did." It was at the close of this march that the Indians drove wild bulls among them; but they cared very little for these new allies of the Spaniards; beef, in any form, was only too welcome.

Morgan burned the fair cedar houses of Panama, but lost the plate ship with all the gold and silver out of the churches. How he tortured a poor wretch who chanced to wear a pair of taffety trousers belonging to his master, with a small silver key hanging out, it is better not to repeat. The men only got two hundred pieces-of-eight each, after all their toil, for their Welshman was indeed a thief, and bilked his crews, no less than he plundered the Spaniards, without remorse. Finally, he sneaked away from the fleet with a ship or two; and it

ADVENTURES OF BUCCANEERS

is to be feared that Captain Morgan made rather a good thing by dint of his incredible cruelty and villainy.

And so we will leave Mr Esquemeling, whom Captain Morgan also deserted; for who would linger long when there is not even honour among thieves? Alluring as the pirate's profession is, we must not forget that it had a seamy side, and was by no means all rum and pieces-of-eight. And there is something repulsive to a generous nature in roasting men because they will not show you where to steal hogs.

From "Essays in Little"

ON BOOKS ABOUT RED MEN

To RICHARD WILBY, Esq., *Eton College, Windsor*

MY DEAR DICK,
It is very good of you, among your severe studies at Eton, to write to your uncle. I am extremely pleased to hear that your football is appreciated in the highest circles, and shall be happy to have as good an account of your skill in making Latin verses.

I am glad you like *She*, Mr Rider Haggard's book which I sent you. It is "something like," as you say, and I quite agree with you, both in being in love with the heroine, and in thinking that she preaches rather too much. But, then, as she was over two thousand years old, and had lived for most of that time among cannibals, who did not understand her, one may excuse her for "jawing," as you say, a good deal, when she met white men. You want to know if *She* is a true story. Of course it is!

But you have read *She*, and you have read all Cooper's, and Marryat's, and Mr Stevenson's books, and *Tom Sawyer*, and *Huckleberry Finn*, several times. So have I, and am quite ready to begin again. But, to my mind, books about Red Indians have always seemed much the most interesting. At your age, I remember, I bought a tomahawk, and, as we had also lots of spears and boomerangs from Australia, the poultry used to have rather a rough time of it.

I never could do very much with a boomerang; but I could throw a spear to a hair's breadth, as many a chicken had occasion to discover. When you go home for Christmas I hope you will remember that all this

ON BOOKS ABOUT RED MEN

was very wrong, and that you will consider we are civilized people, not Mohicans, nor Pawnees. I also made a stone pipe, like Hiawatha's, but I never could drill a hole in the stem, so it did not 'draw' like a civilized pipe.

By way of an awful warning to you on this score, and also, as you say you want a *true* book about Red Indians, let me recommend to you the best book about them I ever came across. It is called *A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner, during Thirty Years' Residence among the Indians*, and it was published at New York by Messrs Carvill, in 1830.

If I were an American publisher instead of a British author (how I wish I was!) I'd publish *John Tanner* again, or perhaps cut a good deal out, and make a boy's book of it. You are not likely to get it to buy, but Mr Steevens, the American bookseller, has found me a copy. If I lend you it, will you be kind enough to illustrate it on separate sheets of paper, and not make drawings on the pages of the book? This will, in the long run, be more satisfactory to yourself, as you will be able to keep your pictures; for I want *John Tanner* back again: and don't lend him to your fag-master.

Tanner was born about 1780; he lived in Kentucky. Don't you wish you had lived in Kentucky in Colonel Boone's time? The Shawnees were roaming about the neighbourhood when Tanner was a little boy. His uncle scalped one of them. This made bad feeling between the Tanners and the Shawnees; but John, like any boy of spirit, wished never to learn lessons, and wanted to be an Indian brave. He soon had more of being a brave than he liked; but he never learned any more lessons, and could not even read or write.

One day John's father told him not to leave the house, because from the movements of the horses he

ANDREW LANG

knew that Indians were in the woods. So John seized the first chance and nipped out, and ran to a walnut-tree in one of the fields, where he began filling his straw hat with walnuts. At that very moment he was caught by two Indians, who spilled the nuts, put his hat on his head, and bolted with him. One of the old women of the tribe had lost her son, and wanted to adopt a boy, and so they adopted Johnny Tanner. They ran with him till he was out of breath, till they reached the Ohio, where they threw him into a canoe, paddled across, and set off running again.

In ten days' hard marching they reached the camp, and it was worse than going to a new school, for all the Indians kicked John Tanner about, and "their dance," he says, "was brisk and cheerful, *after the manner of the scalp dance!*" Cheerful for John! He had to lie between the fire and the door of the lodge, and every one who passed gave him a kick. One old man was particularly cruel. When Tanner was grown up, he came back to that neighbourhood, and the first thing he asked was, "Where is Manito-o-geezhik?"

"Dead, two months since."

"It is well that he is dead," said John Tanner. But an old female chief, Netko-kua, adopted him, and now it began to be fun. For he was sent to shoot game for the family. Could anything be more delightful? His first shot was at pigeons, with a pistol. The pistol knocked down Tanner; but it also knocked down the pigeon. He then caught martins—and measles, which was less entertaining. Even Indians have measles! But even hunting is not altogether fun, when you start with no breakfast and have no chance of supper unless you kill game.

The other Red Indian books, especially the cheap ones, don't tell you that very often the Indians are more

ON BOOKS ABOUT RED MEN

than half starved. Then some one builds a magic lodge, and prays to the Great Spirit. Tanner often did this, and he would then dream how the Great Spirit appeared to him as a beautiful young man, and told him where he would find game, and prophesied other events in his life. It is curious to see a white man taking to the Indian religion, and having exactly the same sort of visions as their red converts described to the Jesuit fathers nearly two hundred years before.

Tanner saw some Indian ghosts, too, when he grew up. On the bank of the Little Saskawjewun there was a capital camping-place where the Indians never camped. It was called *Febing-neezh-o-shin-naut*—"the Place of Two Dead Men." Two Indians of the same totem had killed each other there. Now their totem was that which Tanner bore, the totem of his adopted Indian mother. The story was that if any man camped there, the ghosts would come out of their graves; and that was just what happened. Tanner made the experiment; he camped and fell asleep. "Very soon I saw the two dead men come and sit down by my fire opposite me. I got up and sat opposite them by the fire, and in this position I awoke." Perhaps he fell asleep again, for he now saw the two dead men, who sat opposite to him, and laughed and poked fun and sticks at him. He could neither speak nor run away. One of them showed him a horse on a hill, and said, "There, my brother, is a horse I give you to ride on your journey home, and on your way you can call and leave the horse, and spend another night with us." So, next morning, he found the horse and rode it, but he did not spend another night with the ghosts of his own totem. He had seen enough of them.

Though Tanner believed in his own dreams of the Great Spirit, he did not believe in those of his Indian

ANDREW LANG

mother. He thought she used to prow! about in the daytime, find tracks of a bear or deer, watch where they went to, and then say the beast's lair had been revealed to her in a dream. But Tanner's own visions were 'honest Injun.' Once, in a hard winter, Tanner played a trick on the old woman. All the food they had was a quart of frozen bears'-grease, kept in a kettle with a skin fastened over it. But Tanner caught a rabbit alive and popped him under the skin. So when the old woman went for the bears'-grease in the morning, and found it alive, she was not a little alarmed.

But does not the notion of living on frozen pomatum rather take the guilt off the delight of being an Indian? The old woman was as brave and resolute as a man, but in one day she sold a hundred and twenty beaver skins and many buffalo robes for rum. She always entertained all the neighbouring Indians as long as the rum lasted, and Tanner had a narrow escape of growing up a drunkard. He became such a savage that when an Indian girl carelessly allowed his wigwam to be burned, he stripped her of her blanket and turned her out for the night in the snow.

So Tanner grew up in spite of hunger and drink. Once, when starving, and without bullets, he met a buck moose. If he killed the moose he would be saved, if he did not he would die. So he took the screws out of the lock of his rifle, loaded with them in place of bullets, tied the lock on with string, fired, and killed the moose.

Tanner was worried into marrying a young squaw (at least *he* says he did it because the girl wanted it), and this led to all his sorrows—this and a quarrel with a medicine-man. The medicine-man accused him of being a wizard, and his wife got another Indian to shoot him. Tanner was far from surgeons, and he actually hacked out the bullet himself with an old razor.

ON BOOKS ABOUT RED MEN

Another wounded Indian once amputated his own arm. The ancient Spartans could not have been pluckier. The Indians had other virtues as well as pluck. They were honest and so hospitable, before they knew white men's ways, that they would give poor strangers new mocassins and new buffalo cloaks.

Will it bore you, my dear Dick, if I tell you of an old Indian's death? It seems a pretty and touching story. Old Pe-shau-ba was a friend of Tanner. One day he fell violently ill. He sent for Tanner and said to him: "I remember before I came to live in this world, I was with the Great Spirit above. I saw many good and desirable things, and among others a beautiful woman. And the Great Spirit said: 'Pe-shau-ba, do you love the woman?' I told him I did. Then he said, 'Go down and spend a few winters on earth. You cannot stay long, and you must remember to be always kind and good to my children whom you see below.' So I came down, but I have never forgotten what was said to me.

"I have always stood in the smoke between the two bands when my people fought with their enemies. . . . I now hear the same voice that talked to me before I came into the world. It tells me I can remain here no longer." . . . He then walked out, looked at the sun, the sky, the lake, and the distant hills; then came in, lay down composedly in his place, and in a few minutes ceased to breathe.

If we would hardly care to live like Indians after all (and Tanner tired of it and came back, an old man, to the States), we might desire to die like Pe-shau-ba, if, like him, we had been "good and kind to God's children whom we meet below." So here is a Christmas moral for you, out of a Red Indian book, and I wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

From "Letters on Literature"

FROM MR ALLAN QUATERMAIN TO SIR HENRY CURTIS

Mr Quatermain offers the correct account of two celebrated right and left shots, also an adventure of the Stranger in "The Story of an African Farm."

DEAR CURTIS,
D You ask me to give you the true account, in writing, of those right and left shots of mine at the two lions, the crocodile, and the eagle. The brutes are stuffed now, in the hall at home—the lions each on a pedestal, and the alligator on the floor with the eagle in his jaws—much as they were when I settled them and saved the Stranger. All sorts of stories have got into the papers about the business, which was simple enough; so, though no hand with a pen, I may as well write it all out.

I was up on the Knobkerry River, prospecting for diamonds, in Omomborombunga's country. I had nobody with me but poor Jim-jim, who afterwards met with an awful death, otherwise he would have been glad to corroborate my tale, if it needed it. One night I had come back tired to camp, when I found a stranger sitting by the fire. He was a dark, fat, Frenchified little chap, and you won't believe me, but it is a fact that he wore gloves. I asked him to stay the night, of course, and inspanned the waggons in laager, for Omomborumbunga's impis were out, swearing to wash their spears in the blood of the Great White Liar—a Portuguese traveller probably; if not, I don't know who he can have been; perhaps this stranger: he gave no name.

FROM MR ALLAN QUATERMAIN

Well, we had our biltong together, and the Stranger put himself outside a good deal of the very little brandy I had left. We got yarning, so to speak, and I told him a few of the curious adventures that naturally fall to the lot of a man in those wild countries. The Stranger did not say much, but kept playing with a huge carved walking-stick that he had. Presently he said, "Look at this stick; I bought it from a boy on a South African Farm. Do you understand what the carvings mean?"

"Hanged if I do!" I said, after turning it about.

"Well, do you see that figure?" and he touched a thing like a Noah out of a child's ark. "That was a hunter like you, my friend, but not in all respects. That hunter pursued a vast white bird with silver wings, sailing in the everlasting blue."

"Everlasting bosh!" said I; "there is no bird of the kind on the veldt."

"That bird was Truth," says the Stranger, "and, judging from the anecdote you tell me about the Babyan woman and the Zulu medicine-man, it is a bird *you* don't trouble yourself with much, my friend."

This was a pretty cool thing to say to a man whose veracity is known like a proverb from Sheba's Breasts to the Zambesi.

Foide Macumazahn, the Zulus say, meaning as true as a yarn of Allan Quatermain's. Well, my blood was up; no man shall call Allan Quatermain a liar. The fellow was going on with a prodigious palaver about a white feather of Truth, and Mount Sinai, and the Land of Absolute Negation, and I don't know what, but I signified to him that if he did not believe my yarns I did not want his company. "I'm sorry to turn you out," I said, "for there are lions around"—indeed, they were roaring to each other—"and you will have a parrot time. But you will apologize, or you go!"

ANDREW LANG

He laughed his short, thick laugh. "I am a man who hopes nothing, feels nothing, fears nothing, and believes nothing that you tell me!"

I got up and went for him with my fists, and whether he feared nothing or not I don't know; but he scooted, dropping a yellow French novel, by one Catulle Mendès, that I could make neither head nor tail of. I afterwards heard that there was something about this stranger in a book called *The Story of an African Farm*, which I once began, but never finished, not being able to understand most of it, and being vexed by the gross improbability of the girl not marrying the baby's father, he being ready and willing to make her an honest woman. However, I am no critic, but a plain man who tells a plain tale, and I believe persons of soul admire the book very much. Anyway, it does not say who the Stranger was—an allegorical kind of bagman, I fancy; but I am not done with him yet.

Out he went into the dark, where hundreds of lions could be plainly seen making love (at which season they are very dangerous) by the flashes of lightning.

It was a terrific yet beautiful spectacle, and one which I can never forget. The black of night would suddenly open like a huge silver flower, deep within deep, till you almost fancied you could see within the gates of heaven. The hills stood out dark against the illimitable splendour, and on every kopje you saw the huge lions, like kittens at play, roaring till you could scarcely hear the thunder. The rain was rushing like a river, all glittering like diamonds, and then, in the twinkling of an eye, all was black as a wolf's mouth till the next flash. The lightning, coming from all quarters, appeared to meet above me, and now was red, now golden, now silver again, while the great catlike beasts, as they leaped or lay, looked like gold, red, and silver

FROM MR ALLAN QUATERMAIN

lions, reminding me of the signs of public-houses in old England, far away. Meantime the donga beneath roared with the flooded torrent that the rain was bringing down from the heights of Umbopobekatanktshiu.

I stood watching the grand spectacle for some time, rather pitying the Stranger who was out in it, by no fault of mine. Then I knocked the ashes out of my pipe, ate a mealy or two, and crept into my *kartel*,¹ and slept the sleep of the just.

About dawn I woke. The thunder had rolled away like a bad dream. The long level silver shafts of the dawn were flooding the heights, raindrops glittered like diamonds on every kopje and karoo bush, leaving the deep donga bathed in the solemn pall of mysterious night.

My thoughts went rapidly over the millions of leagues of land and sea, where life, that perpetual problem, was now awaking to another day of struggle and temptation. Then the golden arrows of the day followed fast. The silver and blue sky grew roseate with that wide, wild blush which testifies to the modest delight of nature, satisfied and grateful for her silent existence and her amorous repose. I breakfasted, went down into the donga with a black boy, poor Jim-jim, who was afterwards, as I said, to perish by an awful fate, otherwise he would testify to the truth of my plain story. I began poking among the rocks in the dry basin of the donga,² and had just picked up a pebble—I knew it by the soapy feel for a diamond. Uncut it was about three times the size of the Koh-i-noor—say, 1000 carats—and I was rejoicing in my luck when I heard the scream of a human being in the last agony of terror. Looking

¹ The wooden bed fastened in an ox-waggon.

² Mr Quatermain has just said that the donga was filled by a roaring torrent. Is there not some inconsistency here?

ANDREW LANG

up, I saw that on either side of the donga, which was about twenty feet wide, a great black lion and lioness were standing with open jaws, while some fifty yards in front of me an alligator, in a deep pool of the flooded donga, was stretching his open snout and gleaming teeth greedily upwards. Overhead flew an eagle, and *in mid-air between*, as I am a living and honourable man, a human being was leaping the chasm. He had been pursued by the lion on my left, and had been driven to attempt the terrible leap; but if he crossed he was certain to fall into the jaws of the lion on my right, while if he fell short in his jump, do you see, the alligator was ready for him below, and the great golden eagle watched the business from above, in case he attempted to escape *that way*.

All this takes long to tell, though it was passing in a flash of time. Dropping the diamond (which must have rolled into a crevice of the rock, for I never saw it again), I caught up my double-barrelled rifle (one of Wesson and Smith's), aimed at the lion on the right hand of the donga with my right barrel, and then hastily fired my left at the alligator. When the smoke cleared away, the man had reached the right side of the donga safe and sound. Seeing that the alligator was dying, I loaded again, bowled over the lioness on the left, settled the eagle's business (he fell dead into the jaws of the dying alligator, which closed on him with a snap). I then climbed the wall of the donga, and there lay, fainting, the Stranger of last night—the man who feared nothing—the blood of the dead lion trickling over him. His celebrated allegorical walking-stick from the African Farm had been broken into two pieces by the bullet after it (the bullet) had passed through the head of the lion. And, as the *Ingoldsby Legends* say, “nobody was one penny the worse,” except the wild-

FROM MR ALLAN QUATERMAIN

beasts. The man, however, had had a parrot time, and it was a good hour before I could bring him round, during which he finished my brandy. He still wore gloves. What he was doing in Omomborombunga's country I do not know to this day. I never found the diamond again, though I hunted long. But I must say that two better right and left shots, considering that I had no time to aim, I never remember to have made in my long experience.

This is the short and the long of the matter, which was talked of a good deal in the Colony, and about which, I am told, some inaccurate accounts have got into the newspapers. I hate writing, as you know, and don't pretend to give a literary colour to this little business of the shots, but merely tell a "plain, unvarnished tale," as the *Ingoldsby Legends* say.

As to the Stranger, what he was doing there, or who he was, or where he is now, I can tell you nothing. He told me he was bound for "the almighty mountains of Dry-facts and Realities," which he kindly pointed out to me among the carvings of his walking-stick. He then sighed wearily, very wearily, and scooted. I think he came to no good; but he never came in my way again.

And now you know the yarn of the two stuffed lions and the alligator with the eagle in his jaws.

Ever yours,

ALLAN QUATERMAIN

From "Old Friends"

JOHN BUNYAN

DR JOHNSON once took Bishop Percy's little daughter on his knee, and asked her what she thought of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The child answered that she had not read it. "No?" replied the Doctor; "then I would not give one farthing for you," and he set her down and took no further notice of her.

This story, if true, proves that the Doctor was rather intolerant. We must not excommunicate people because they have not our taste in books. The majority of people do not care for books at all.

There is a descendant of John Bunyan's alive now, or there was lately, who never read *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Books are not in his line. Nay, Bunyan himself, who wrote sixty works, was no great reader. An Oxford scholar who visited him in his study found no books at all, except some of Bunyan's own and Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*.

Yet, little as the world in general cares for reading, it has read Bunyan more than most. One hundred thousand copies of the *Pilgrim* are believed to have been sold in his own day, and the story has been done into the most savage languages, as well as into those of the civilized world.

Dr Johnson, who did not like Dissenters, praises the "invention, imagination, and conduct of the story," and knew no other book he wished longer except *Robinson Crusoe* and *Don Quixote*. Well, Dr Johnson would not have given a farthing for *me*, as I am quite contented with the present length of these masterpieces. What books do *you* wish longer? I wish Homer had

written a continuation of the *Odyssey*, and told us what *Odysseus* did among the far-off men who never tasted salt nor heard of the sea. A land epic after the sea epic, how good it would have been—from *Homer*! But it would have taxed the imagination of *Dante* to continue the adventures of *Christian* and his wife after they had once crossed the river and reached the city.

John Bunyan has been more fortunate than most authors in one of his biographies.

His life has been written by the *Rev. Dr Brown*, who is now minister of his old congregation at *Bedford*; and an excellent life it is. *Dr Brown* is neither *Round-head* nor *Cavalier*; for though he is, of course, on *Bunyan's* side, he does not throw stones at the beautiful *Church of England*.

Probably most of us are on *Bunyan's* side now. It might be a good thing that we should all dwell together in religious unity, but history shows that people cannot be bribed into brotherhood. They tried to bully *Bunyan*; they arrested and imprisoned him—unfairly even in law, according to *Dr Brown*; not unfairly, *Mr Froude* thinks—and he would not be bullied.

What was much more extraordinary, he would not be embittered. In spite of all, he still called *Charles II* "a gracious prince." When a subject is in conscience at variance with the law, *Bunyan* said, he has but one course—to accept peaceably the punishment which the law awards. He was never soured, never angered by twelve years of durance, not exactly in a loathsome dungeon, but in very uncomfortable quarters. When there came a brief interval of toleration, he did not occupy himself in brawling, but in preaching, and looking after the manners and morals of the little "church," including one woman who brought disagreeable charges against "*Brother Honeylove*." The

ANDREW LANG

church decided that there was nothing in the charges, but somehow the name of Brother Honeylove does not inspire confidence.

Almost everybody knows the main facts of Bunyan's life. They may not know that he was of Norman descent (as Dr Brown seems to succeed in proving), nor that the Bunyans came over with the Conqueror, nor that he was a gipsy, as others hold. On Dr Brown's showing, Bunyan's ancestors lost their lands in process of time and change, and Bunyan's father was a tinker. He preferred to call himself a brazier—his was the rather unexpected trade to which Mr Dick proposed apprenticing David Copperfield.

Bunyan himself, "the wondrous babe," as Dr Brown enthusiastically styles him, was christened on November 30th, 1628. He was born in a cottage, long fallen, and hard by was a marshy place, "a veritable slough of despond." Bunyan may have had it in mind when he wrote of the slough where Christian had so much trouble. He was not a travelled man: all his knowledge of people and places he found at his doors. He had some schooling, "according to the rate of other poor men's children," and assuredly it was enough.

The great civil war broke out, and Bunyan was a soldier; he tells us not on which side. Dr Brown and Mr Lewis Morris think that he was on that of the Parliament, but his old father, the tinker, stood for the King. Mr Froude is rather more inclined to hold that he was among the "gay gallants who struck for the Crown." He does not seem to have been much under fire, but he got that knowledge of the appearance of war which he used in his siege of the City of Mansoul. One can hardly think that Bunyan liked war—certainly not from cowardice, but from goodness of heart.

In 1646 the army was disbanded, and Bunyan went

JOHN BUNYAN

back to Elstow village and his tinkering, his bell-ringing, his dancing with the girls, his playing at 'cat' on a Sunday after service.

He married very young and poor. He married a pious wife, and read all her library—*The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven*, and *The Practice of Piety*. He became very devout in the spirit of the Church of England, and he gave up his amusements. Then he fell into the Slough of Despond, then he went through the Valley of the Shadow, and battled with Apollyon.

People have wondered *why* he fancied himself such a sinner? He confesses to having been a liar and a blasphemer. If I may guess, I fancy that this was merely the literary genius of Bunyan seeking for expression. His lies, I would go bail, were tremendous romances, wild fictions told for fun, never lies of cowardice or for gain. As to his blasphemies, he had an extraordinary power of language, and that was how he gave it play. 'Fancy swearing' was his only literary safety-valve, in those early days, when he played 'cat' on Elstow Green.

Then he heard a voice dart from heaven into his soul, which said, "Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to heaven, or have thy sins and go to hell?" So he fell on repentance, and passed those awful years of mental torture, when all nature seemed to tempt him to the Unknown Sin.

What did all this mean? It meant that Bunyan was within an ace of madness.

It happens to a certain proportion of men, religiously brought up, to suffer like Bunyan. They hear voices, they are afraid of that awful unknown iniquity, and of eternal death, as Bunyan and Cowper were afraid.

Was it not De Quincey who was at school with a bully who believed he had been guilty of the unpardon-

ANDREW LANG

able offence? Bullying is an offence much less pardonable than most men are guilty of. Their best plan (in Bunyan's misery) is to tell Apollyon that the Devil is an ass, to do their work, and speak the truth.

Bunyan got quit of his terror at last, briefly by believing in the goodness of God. He did not say, like Mr Carlyle, "Well, if all my fears are true, what then?" His was a Christian, not a stoical deliverance.

The church in which Bunyan found shelter had for minister a converted major in a Royalist regiment. It was a quaint little community, the members living like the early disciples, correcting each other's faults, and keeping a severe eye on each other's lives. Bunyan became a minister in it; but, Puritan as he was, he lets his Pilgrims dance on joyful occasions, and even Mr Ready-to-Halt waltzes with a young lady of the Pilgrim company.

As a minister and teacher Bunyan began to write books of controversy with Quakers and clergymen. The points debated are no longer important to us; the main thing was that he got a pen into his hand, and found a proper outlet for his genius, a better way than fancy swearing.

If he had not been cast into Bedford Jail for preaching in a cottage, he might never have dreamed his immortal dream, nor become all that he was. The leisure of gaol were long. In that "den" the Muse came to him, the fair kind Muse of the Home Beautiful. He saw all that company of his, so like and so unlike Chaucer's: Faithful, and Hopeful, and Christian, the fellowship of fiends, the truculent Cavaliers of Vanity Fair, and Giant Despair, with his grievous crabtree cudgel; and other people he saw who are with us always—the handsome Madam Bubble, and the young woman whose name was Dull, and Mr Worldly Wise-

man, and Mr Facing Bothways, and Byends, all the persons of the comedy of human life.

He hears the angelic songs of the city beyond the river; he hears them, but repeat them to us he cannot, "for I'm no poet," as he says himself. He beheld the country of Beulah, and the Delectable Mountains, that earthly Paradise of nature where we might be happy yet, and wander no farther, if the world would let us—fair mountains in whose streams Izaak Walton was then even casting angle.

It is pleasant to fancy how Walton and Bunyan might have met and talked, under a plane-tree by the Ouse, while the May showers were falling. Surely Bunyan would not have likened the good old man to Formalist; and certainly Walton would have enjoyed travelling with Christian, though the book was by none of his dear bishops, but by a Nonconformist. They were made to like but not to convert each other; in matters ecclesiastical they saw the opposite sides of the shield. Each wrote a masterpiece. It is too late to praise *The Complete Angler* or *The Pilgrim's Progress*. You may put ingenuity on the rack, but she can say nothing new that is true about the best romance that ever was wedded to allegory, nor about the best idyl of old English life.

The people are living now—all the people: the noisy, bullying judges, as of the French Revolutionary Courts, or the Hanging Courts after Monmouth's war; the demure, grave Puritan girls; and Matthew, who had the gripes; and lazy, feckless Ignorance, who came to so ill an end, poor fellow; and sturdy Old Honest, and timid Mr Fearing; not single persons, but dozens, arise on the memory.

They come, as fresh, as vivid, as if they were out of Scott or Molière; the Tinker is as great a master of

ANDREW LANG

character and fiction as the greatest, almost ; his style is pure, and plain, and sound, full of old idioms, and even of something like old slang. But even his slang is classical.

Bunyan is everybody's author. The very Catholics have their own edition of the *Pilgrim*: they have cut out Giant Pope, but have been too good-natured to insert Giant Protestant in his place. Unheralded, unannounced, though not uncriticized (they accused the Tinker of being a plagiarist, of course), Bunyan outshone the Court wits, the learned, the poets of the Restoration, and even the great theologians.

His other books, except *Grace Abounding* (an autobiography), *The Holy War*, and *Mr Badman*, are only known to students, nor much read by them. The fashion of his theology, as of all theology, passed away; it is by virtue of his imagination, of his romance, that he lives.

The allegory, of course, is full of flaws. It would not have been manly of Christian to run off and save his own soul, leaving his wife and family. But Bunyan shrank from showing us how difficult, if not impossible, it is for a married man to be a saint. Christiana was really with him all through the pilgrimage; and how he must have been hampered by that woman of the world! But had the allegory clung more closely to the skirts of truth, it would have changed from a romance to a satire, from *The Pilgrim's Progress* to *Vanity Fair*. There was too much love in Bunyan for a satirist of that kind; he had just enough for a humorist.

Born in another class, he might have been, he would have been, a writer more refined in his strength, more uniformly excellent, but never so universal nor so popular in the best sense of the term.

In the change of times and belief it is not impossible

that Bunyan will live among the class whom he least thought of addressing—scholars, lovers of worldly literature—for devotion and poverty are parting company, while art endures till civilization perishes.

Are we better or worse for no longer believing as Bunyan believed, no longer seeing that Abyss of Pascal's open beside our armchairs? The question is only a form of that wide riddle, Does any theological or philosophical opinion make us better or worse? The vast majority of men and women are little affected by schemes and theories of this life and the next. They who even ask for a reply to the riddle are the few: most of us take the easygoing morality of our world for a guide, as we take Bradshaw for a railway journey. It is the few who must find out an answer: on that answer their lives depend, and the lives of others are insensibly raised towards their level. Bunyan would not have been a worse man if he had shared the faith of Izaak Walton. Izaak had his reply to all questions in the Church Catechism and the Articles. Bunyan found his in the theology of his sect, appealing more strongly than orthodoxy to a nature more bellicose than Izaak's. Men like him, with his indomitable courage, will never lack a solution of the puzzle of the earth. At worst they will live by law, whether they dare to speak of it as God's law, or dare not. They will always be our leaders, our Captain Greathearts, in the pilgrimage to the city where, led or unled, we must all at last arrive. They will not fail us while loyalty and valour are human qualities. The day may conceivably come when we have no Christian to march before us, but we shall never lack the company of Greatheart.

From "Essays in Little"

A BOOKMAN'S PURGATORY

THOMAS BLINTON was a book-hunter. He had always been a book-hunter, ever since, at an extremely early age, he had awakened to the errors of his ways as a collector of stamps and monograms. In book-hunting he saw no harm; nay, he would contrast its joys, in a rather pharisaical style, with the pleasures of shooting and fishing. He constantly declined to believe that the devil came for that renowned amateur of black letter, G. Steevens. Dibdin himself, who tells the story (with obvious anxiety and alarm), pretends to refuse credit to the ghastly narrative. "His language," says Dibdin, in his account of the book-hunter's end, "was, too frequently, the language of imprecation." This is rather good, as if Dibdin thought a gentleman might swear pretty often, but not "*too* frequently." "Although I am not disposed to admit," Dibdin goes on, "the *whole* of the testimony of the good woman who watched by Steevens's bedside, although my prejudices (as they may be called) will not allow me to believe that the windows shook, and that strange noises and deep groans were heard at midnight in his room, yet no creature of common sense (and this woman possessed the quality in an eminent degree) could mistake oaths for prayers"; and so forth. In short, Dibdin clearly holds that the windows did shake "without a blast," like the banners in Branhholme Hall when somebody came for the Goblin Page.

But Thomas Blinton would hear of none of these things. He said that his taste made him take exercise; that he walked from the City to West Kensington

A BOOKMAN'S PURGATORY

every day, to beat the covers of the bookstalls, while other men travelled in the expensive cab or the unwholesome Metropolitan Railway. We are all apt to hold favourable views of our own amusements, and, for my own part, I believe that trout and salmon are incapable of feeling pain. But the flimsiness of Blinton's theories must be apparent to every unbiassed moralist. His "harmless taste" really involved most of the deadly sins, or at all events a fair working majority of them. He coveted his neighbours' books. When he got the chance he bought books in a cheap market and sold them in a dear market, thereby degrading literature to the level of trade. He took advantage of the ignorance of uneducated persons who kept bookstalls. He was envious, and grudged the good fortune of others, while he rejoiced in their failures. He turned a deaf ear to the appeals of poverty. He was luxurious, and laid out more money than he should have done on his selfish pleasures, often adorning a volume with a morocco binding when Mrs Blinton sighed in vain for some old *point d'Alençon* lace. Greedy, proud, envious, stingy, extravagant, and sharp in his dealings, Blinton was guilty of most of the sins which the Church recognizes as "deadly."

On the very day before that of which the affecting history is now to be told, Blinton had been running the usual round of crime. He had (as far as intentions went) defrauded a bookseller in Holywell Street by purchasing from him, for the sum of two shillings, what he took to be a very rare Elzevir. It is true that when he got home and consulted "Willems," he found that he had got hold of the wrong copy, in which the figures denoting the numbers of pages are printed right, and which is therefore worth exactly 'nuppence' to the collector. But the intention is the thing, and Blinton's intention

ANDREW LANG

was distinctly fraudulent. When he discovered his error, then "his language," as Dibdin says, "was that of imprecation." Worse (if possible) than this, Blinton had gone to a sale, begun to bid for *Les Essais de Michel, Seigneur de Montaigne* (Foppens, MDCLIX), and, carried away by excitement, had 'plunged' to the extent of £15, which was precisely the amount of money he owed his plumber and gasfitter, a worthy man with a large family. Then, meeting a friend (if the book-hunter has friends), or rather an accomplice in lawless enterprise, Blinton had remarked the glee on the other's face. The poor man had purchased a little old Olaus Magnus, with woodcuts, representing werewolves, fire-drakes, and other fearful wildfowl, and was happy in his bargain. But Blinton, with fiendish joy, pointed out to him that the index was imperfect, and left him sorrowing.

Deeds more foul have yet to be told. Thomas Blinton had discovered a new sin, so to speak, in the collecting way. Aristophanessays of one of his favourite blackguards, "Not only is he a villain, but he has invented an original villainy." Blinton was like this. He maintained that every man who came to notoriety had, at some period, published a volume of poems which he had afterwards repented of and withdrawn. It was Blinton's hideous pleasure to collect stray copies of these unhappy volumes, these *péchés de jeunesse*, which, always and invariably, bear a gushing inscription from the author to a friend. He had all Lord John Manners's poems, and even Mr Ruskin's. He had the *Ode to Despair* of Smith (presently a comic writer), and the *Love Lyrics* of Brown, who is now a Permanent Under-secretary, than which nothing can be less gay nor more permanent. He had the amatory songs which a dignitary of the Church published and withdrew from

circulation. Blinton was wont to say he expected to come across *Triolets of a Tribune*, by Mr John Bright, and *Original Hymns for Infant Minds*, by Mr Henry Labouchere, if he only hunted long enough.

On the day of which I speak he had secured a volume of love-poems which the author had done his best to destroy, and he had gone to his club and read all the funniest passages aloud to friends of the author, who was on the club committee. Ah, was this a kind action? In short, Blinton had filled up the cup of his iniquities, and nobody will be surprised to hear that he met the appropriate punishment of his offence. Blinton had passed, on the whole, a happy day, notwithstanding the error about the Elzevir. He dined well at his club, went home, slept well, and started next morning for his office in the City, walking, as usual, and intending to pursue the pleasures of the chase at all the bookstalls. At the very first, in the Brompton Road, he saw a man turning over the rubbish in the cheap box. Blinton stared at him, fancied he knew him, thought he didn't, and then became a prey to the glittering eye of the other. The Stranger, who wore the conventional cloak and slouched soft hat of Strangers, was apparently an accomplished mesmerist, or thought-reader, or adept, or esoteric Buddhist. He resembled Mr Isaacs, Zanoni (in the novel of that name), Mendoza (in *Codlingsby*), the soulless man in *A Strange Story*, Mr Home, Mr Irving Bishop, a Buddhist adept in the astral body, and most other mysterious characters of history and fiction. Before his Awful Will, Blinton's mere modern obstinacy shrank back like a child abashed. The Stranger glided to him and whispered, "Buy these."

"These" were a complete set of Auerbach's novels, in English, which, I need not say, Blinton would never have dreamt of purchasing had he been left to his own devices.

"Buy these!" repeated the Adept, or whatever he was, in a cruel whisper. Paying the sum demanded, and trailing his vast load of German romance, poor Blinton followed the fiend.

They reached a stall where, amongst much trash, Glatigny's *Jour de l'An d'un Vagabond* was exposed.

"Look," said Blinton, "there is a book I have wanted some time. Glatignys are getting rather scarce, and it is an amusing trifle."

"Nay, buy *that*," said the implacable Stranger, pointing with a hooked forefinger at Alison's *History of Europe*, in an indefinite number of volumes. Blinton shuddered.

"What, buy *that*, and why? In heaven's name, what could I do with it?"

"Buy it," repeated the persecutor, "and *that*" (indicating the *Ilios* of Dr Schliemann, a bulky work), "and *these*" (pointing to all Mr Theodore Alois Buckley's translations of the Classics), "and *these*" (glancing at the collected writings of the late Mr Hain Friswell, and at a *Life*, in more than one volume, of Mr Gladstone).

The miserable Blinton paid, and trudged along carrying the bargains under his arm. Now one book fell out, now another dropped by the way. Sometimes a portion of Alison came ponderously to earth; sometimes the *Gentle Life* sunk resignedly to the ground. The Adept kept picking them up again, and packing them under the arms of the weary Blinton.

The victim now attempted to put on an air of geniality, and tried to enter into conversation with his tormentor.

"He *does* know about books," thought Blinton, "and he must have a weak spot somewhere."

So the wretched amateur made play in his best con-

A BOOKMAN'S PURGATORY

versational style. He talked of bindings, of Maioli, of Grolier, of De Thou, of Derome, of Clovis Eve, of Roger Payne, of Trautz, and eke of Bauzonnet. He discoursed of first editions, of black letter, and even of illustrations and vignettes. He approached the topic of Bibles, but here his tyrant, with a fierce yet timid glance, interrupted him.

"Buy those!" he hissed through his teeth.

"Those" were the complete publications of the Folk-lore Society.

Blinton did not care for folk-lore (very bad men never do), but he had to act as he was told.

Then, without pause or remorse, he was charged to acquire the *Ethics* of Aristotle, in the agreeable versions of Williams and Chase. Next he secured *Strathmore*, *Chandos*, *Under Two Flags*, and *Two Little Wooden Shoes*, and several dozens more of Ouida's novels. The next stall was entirely filled with school-books, old geographies, Livys, Delectuses, Arnold's *Greek Exercises*, Ollendorffs, and what not.

"Buy them all," hissed the fiend. He seized whole boxes, and piled them on Blinton's head.

He tied up Ouida's novels in two parcels, with string, and fastened each to one of the buttons above the tails of Blinton's coat.

"You are tired?" asked the tormentor. "Never mind, these books will soon be off your hands."

So speaking, the Stranger, with amazing speed, hurried Blinton back through Holywell Street, along the Strand, and up to Piccadilly, stopping at last at the door of Blinton's famous and very expensive binder.

The binder opened his eyes, as well he might, at the vision of Blinton's treasures. Then the miserable Blinton found himself, as it were automatically and without any exercise of his will, speaking thus:

ANDREW LANG

“ Here are some things I have picked up—extremely rare—and you will oblige me by binding them in your best manner, regardless of expense. Morocco, of course; crushed levant morocco, *doublé*, every book of them, *petits fers*, my crest and coat of arms, plenty of gilding. Spare no cost. Don’t keep me waiting, as you generally do ”; for indeed bookbinders are the most dilatory of the human species.

Before the astonished binder could ask the most necessary questions, Blinton’s tormentor had hurried that amateur out of the room.

“ Come on to the sale,” he cried.

“ What sale? ” said Blinton.

“ Why, the Beckford sale; it is the thirteenth day, a lucky day.”

“ But I have forgotten my catalogue.”

“ Where is it? ”

“ In the third shelf from the top, on the right-hand side of the ebony bookcase at home.”

The Stranger stretched out his arm, which swiftly elongated itself till the hand disappeared from view round the corner. In a moment the hand returned with the catalogue. The pair sped on to Messrs Sotheby’s auction-rooms in Wellington Street. Every one knows the appearance of a great book-sale. The long table, surrounded by eager bidders, resembles from a little distance a roulette table, and communicates the same sort of excitement. The amateur is at a loss to know how to conduct himself. If he bids in his own person, some bookseller will outbid him, partly because the bookseller knows that, after all, he knows little about books, and suspects that the amateur may, in this case, know more. Besides, professionals always dislike amateurs, and, in this game, they have a very great advantage. Blinton knew all this, and was in the habit

A BOOKMAN'S PURGATORY

of giving his commissions to a broker. But now he felt (and very naturally) as if a demon had entered into him. *Tirante il Bianco Valorosissimo Cavaliere* was being competed for, an excessively rare romance of chivalry, in magnificent red Venetian morocco, from Canevari's library. The book is one of the rarest of the Venetian Press, and beautifully adorned with Canevari's device—a simple and elegant affair in gold and colours. "Apollo is driving his chariot across the green waves towards the rock, on which winged Pegasus is pawing the ground," though why this action of a horse should be called 'pawing' (the animal notoriously not possessing paws) it is hard to say. Round this graceful design is the inscription ΟΡΘΩΣ ΚΑΙ ΜΗ ΛΟΞΙΩΣ ("Straight, not crooked"). In his ordinary mood Blinton could only have admired *Tirante il Bianco* from a distance. But now, the demon inspiring him, he rushed into the lists, and challenged the great Mr ——, the Napoleon of bookselling. The price had already reached five hundred pounds.

"Six hundred," cried Blinton.

"Guineas," said the great Mr ——.

"Seven hundred," screamed Blinton.

"Guineas," replied the other.

This arithmetical dialogue went on till even Mr —— struck his flag, with a sigh, when the maddened Blinton had said, "Six thousand." The cheers of the audience rewarded the largest bid ever made for any book. As if he had not done enough, the Stranger now impelled Blinton to contend with Mr —— for every expensive work that appeared. The audience naturally fancied that Blinton was in the earlier stage of softening of the brain, when a man conceives himself to have inherited boundless wealth, and is determined to live up to it. The hammer fell for the last time. Blinton owed

ANDREW LANG

some fifty thousand pounds, and exclaimed audibly, as the influence of the fiend died out, "I am a ruined man."

"Then your books must be sold," cried the Stranger, and, leaping on a chair, he addressed the audience:

"Gentlemen, I invite you to Mr Blinton's sale, which will immediately take place. The collection contains some very remarkable early English poets, many first editions of the French classics, most of the rarer Aldines, and a singular assortment of Americana."

In a moment, as if by magic, the shelves round the room were filled with Blinton's books, all tied up in big lots of some thirty volumes each. His early Molières were fastened to old French dictionaries and school-books. His Shakespeare quartos were in the same lot with tattered railway novels. His copy (almost unique) of Richard Barnfield's much too *Affectionate Shepheard* was coupled with odd volumes of *Chips from a German Workshop* and a cheap, imperfect example of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. Hookes's *Amanda* was at the bottom of a lot of American devotional works, where it kept company with an Elzevir Tacitus and the Aldine *Hypnerotomachia*. The auctioneer put up lot after lot, and Blinton plainly saw that the whole affair was a 'knock-out.' His most treasured spoils were parted with at the price of waste paper. It is an awful thing to be present at one's own sale. No man would bid above a few shillings. Well did Blinton know that after the knock-out the plunder would be shared among the grinning bidders. At last his *Adonais*, uncut, bound by Lortic, went, in company with some old *Bradshaws*, the *Court Guide* of 1881, and a stray volume of the *Sunday at Home*, for sixpence. The Stranger smiled a smile of peculiar malignity. Blinton leaped up to pro-

60

A BOOKMAN'S PURGATORY

test; the room seemed to shake around him, but words would not come to his lips.

Then he heard a familiar voice observe, as a familiar grasp shook his shoulder:

"Tom, Tom, what a nightmare you are enjoying!"

He was in his own armchair, where he had fallen asleep after dinner, and Mrs Blinton was doing her best to arouse him from his awful vision. Beside him lay *L'Enfer du Bibliophile, vu et décrit par Charles Asselineau* (Paris: Tardieu, MDCCCLX).

If this were an ordinary tract, I should have to tell how Blinton's eyes were opened, how he gave up book-collecting, and took to gardening, or politics, or something of that sort. But truth compels me to admit that Blinton's repentance had vanished by the end of the week, when he was discovered marking M. Claudin's catalogue, surreptitiously, before breakfast. Thus, indeed, end all our remorse. "Lancelot falls to his own love again," as in the romance. Much, and justly, as theologians decry a deathbed repentance, it is, perhaps, the only repentance that we do not repent of. All others leave us ready, when occasion comes, to fall to our old love again; and may that love never be worse than the taste for old books! Once a collector, always a collector. *Moi qui parle*, I have sinned, and struggled, and fallen. I have thrown catalogues, unopened, into the wastepaper-basket. I have withheld my feet from the paths that lead to Sotheby's and to Puttick's. I have crossed the street to avoid a bookstall. In fact, like the prophet Nicholas, "I have been known to be steady for weeks at a time." And then the fatal moment of temptation has arrived, and I have succumbed to the soft seductions of Eisen, or Cochin, or an old book on angling. Probably Grolier was thinking

ANDREW LANG

of such weaknesses when he chose his devices *Tanquam ventus*, and *Quisque suos patimur Manes*. Like the wind we are blown about, and, like the people in the *Æneid*, we are obliged to suffer the consequences of our own extravagance.

From "Books and Bookmen"

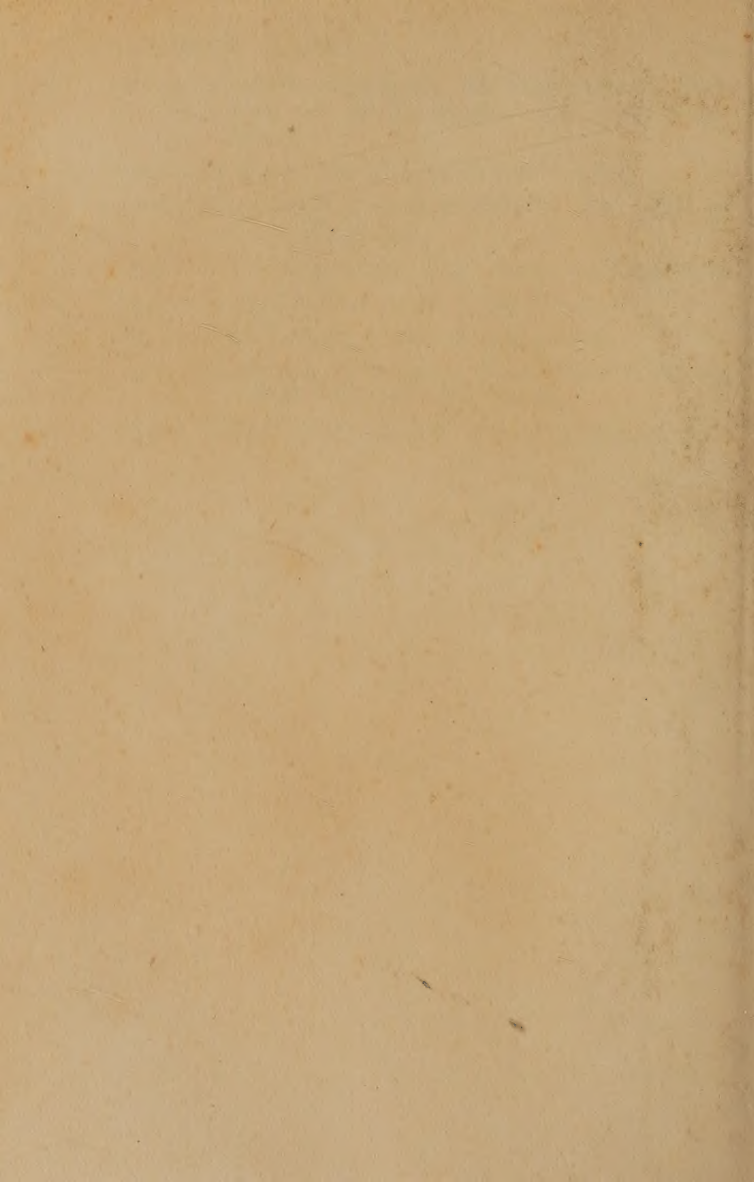
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

(The publishers of books at present out of print are not given.)

- 1882 : *Helen of Troy*.
1884 : *Custom and Myth*.
1886 : *Letters to Dead Authors. In the Wrong Paradise.*
 Books and Bookmen (Longmans). *The Mark of*
 Cain (Arrowsmith).
1887 : *Myth, Ritual, and Religion* (Longmans).
1888 : *The Gold of Fairnilee*.
1889 : *Letters on Literature. Lost Leaders*.
1890 : *How to Fail in Literature. Old Friends : Essays in*
 Epistolary Parody (Longmans). *Life, Letters, and*
 Diaries of Sir Stafford Northcote.
1891 : *Angling Sketches. Essays in Little*.
1893 : *St Andrews. Homer and the Epic*.
1894 : *Cock Lane and Common Sense*.
1896 : *The Life and Letters of John Gibson Lockhart*.
1897 : *Pickle the Spy. Modern Mythology*.
1898 : *The Companions of Pickle. The Making of Religion*.
1899 : *Alfred Tennyson* ("Modern English Writers" series,
 Blackwood).
1900-7 : *A History of Scotland from the Roman Occupation*
 (Blackwood).
1902 : *The Book of Dreams and Ghosts. The Disentanglers.*
 James VI and the Gowrie Mystery.
1903 : *The Valet's Tragedy. Prince Charles Edward Stuart*
 (Longmans).
1904 : *Historical Mysteries*.

ANDREW LANG

- 1905: *Adventures among Books. The Clyde Mystery. John Knox and the Reformation. The Secret of the Totem.*
- 1906: *Sir Walter Scott* ("Literary Lives" series).
- 1908: *The Origins of Religion* (Watts). *The Maid of France* (Longmans).
- 1909: *Sir George Mackenzie, King's Advocate, of Rosenhaugh.*
- 1910: *Sir Walter Scott and the Border Minstrelsy.*
- 1911: *A Short History of Scotland* (Blackwood).
- 1912: *Shakespeare, Bacon, and the Great Unknown. History of English Literature* (Longmans).
- 1923: *Poetical Works*, edited by Mrs Lang (Longmans).





KS-237-980

